

# Caregiver Connection

March 2009

A monthly publication for Washington state foster and adoptive families and relative caregivers

## Supporting foster youth in education and their future

Washington State is at the head of the class in pursuing a number of educational initiatives to help children and youth succeed in public school and prepare for post secondary education.

Our youth need all the help we can give them! Foster youth have significantly higher needs than those emancipating from their families, and a greater need for services to support them in transitioning to adulthood. Historically, children in foster care have demonstrated higher needs for mental health, substance abuse, and health care services.

Statically, about 75 percent of the general population graduate from high school compared to 30 percent of foster youth. Of that 30 percent of foster youth that graduate, 3 percent go to college and 1 percent graduate from college. (Children's Administration Performance Report 2005, The Foster Care Alumni Studies revised March 14, 2005).

The challenges foster youth face are many. For most youth, families are there to support the first tentative steps toward independence. Youth who enter adulthood from foster care are unlikely to have family members who can act as a safety net. Part of preparing them for independence is ensuring that they know what resources exist for them in the community and that they know how to access them. Community-based and government services are, their primary safety net.

- In 2007 over 2,000 Washington state foster children received services from Educational Advocates who help foster children in public schools access resources for better outcomes. These services can be accessed through the assigned CA social worker.
- The Passport to College program provides education planning and scholarships for children age 14 and older in conjunction with the Higher Education Coordinating Board. CA is presently contracting with 6 community agencies to provide Supplemental Education (SETuP) supports to 14-18 year olds in order to prepare them for post secondary education. This program can be accessed via the CA program manager @ (360) 902-8487 or by email [prji300@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:prji300@dshs.wa.gov).
- Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) is available to former foster youth starting at age 18 who are attending educational institutions. They can receive up to \$5,000 annually for educational expenses (Federal Chafee dollars support ETV programs in every state). For questions about ETV call 1-877-433-8388 or e-mail [etvwash@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:etvwash@dshs.wa.gov).
- College Bound Scholarship Program, is available to Washington State foster youth residing in this state. Foster youth in grades 7th and 8th are eligible to sign up. For 2009 only, 9th graders are eligible to sign up until June of this year. This program pays for tuition not covered by other financial aid programs and up to

\$500 toward books is paid when youth attend a public two or four year college. For questions about College Bound Scholarships phone 1-888-535-0747 or email [collegebound@hecb.wa.gov](mailto:collegebound@hecb.wa.gov).

### Independence.wa.gov is geared for youth!

In cooperation with the Higher Education Coordinating Board, CA developed a web site, [independence.wa.gov](http://independence.wa.gov). The website has information concerning most of the programs listed above as well as scholarship information and links to other resources for current and former foster youth.

Foster youth need encouragement and support to believe that they can be successful in obtaining a college degree or vocational training. All students need assistance in applying for financial aid to help pay for college. Helping our youth become successful is affordable and promises to have significant rewards for youth themselves and for their communities far into the future.

## Regional Foster Parent Representatives

### REGION 1

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Photo by Greg Cook

## Meet the Mathis Stewart family

Shannon and Nancy always wanted children. As a same-sex couple, they went through the challenging and costly process to have their son Rhys (Reece) and daughter Rhian (Ryan) who are now 10 and 7 years old.

They had been together 13 years and were living a happy life raising their kids and staying active in their community.

A relative introduced them to Angie. Angie was fifteen; living in a group home and struggling to manage teenage life while pretty much parenting herself. A chance meeting at a pharmacy where Shannon saw an obviously sick Angie getting her own prescriptions gave Shannon pause. Shannon gave Angie a ride home and found where she was living just wasn't a good fit for Angie.

Shannon and Nancy sought someone who could provide a home for Angie. Nancy was ready to take Angie before Shannon agreed. Shannon recounts her decision by saying, "I'm not a half-way kind of person so I knew if I took this kid, she was going to be my kid." Shannon agreed their home was the best home for Angie and thought if they didn't step forward, who would? They contacted the social worker, sought guardianship, became licensed, and on May 1, 2007 became Angie's legal guardians. Angie is "their kid!"

Both parents work for DSHS and Angie, now 18 also works. Angie graduated from Tenino High School in June and attends South Puget Sound Community College. Angie is involved with the Passion to Action group. She was awarded a Governor's Scholarship and is benefiting from Foster Care to 21, Passport to College and the ETV Program.

The Mathis Stewart home exudes kindness, structure, warmth, and unconditional love for all of their children. They stay busy with activities such as music, sports, dance, work, college, and the Tenino School District.

When asked what they would tell a potential foster parent, Shannon replied "When you open your home to a child you give a life transforming gift. When you open your heart to the unconditional love that children give, you receive an even greater gift in return".

Shannon and Nancy looked for the perfect home for a hurting child in their lives and discovered it was their home.

You can too.

### TELL US YOUR FAMILY STORY

The feature families you are meeting are your neighbors and community members. Just like you, they are making a difference in the lives of children throughout Washington State. If you are a foster parent, guardian or relative caregiver and would like to share your story, please contact Michael Luque (360) 902-7986 or email [lumi300@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:lumi300@dshs.wa.gov).

## Check out other scholarships for college bound youth

Chances are pretty slim that someone is going to knock on a potential college student's door and ask if they can use a scholarship. Youth and their caregivers can access scholarship dollars if they are willing to do a little research and put some effort into the process.

Some scholarship dollars simply go unused, because students fail to apply for them. Many companies like Gates Millennium Scholarships, National Assoc. of Black Journalists Scholarships, and the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund are offering scholarships for African American students.

The Veteran's of Foreign Wars, Voice of Democracy offers an audio essay contest with multiple scholarships for 9th – 12th grade students. The theme for the 2009-2010 contest is "Does America Still Have Heroes"? The entry deadline is November 1, 2009. Along with national scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$16,000, each state's first-place winner receives an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., sponsored by Target. For more information on this scholarship and other scholarships offered by the VFW go to: [www.vfw.org/index](http://www.vfw.org/index) and click on "Programs".

Even if you do not have a college-aged child at home, please share this with someone who does, and to anyone and everyone who might benefit. Though there are a number of companies and organizations that have donated money for scholarships, a great deal of the money is being returned because of a lack of interest or more likely, lack of awareness that this "free money" is out there.

As caregivers, social workers, and child advocates, we can help spread the word that money is available. If you are currently a college student or just now looking at the possibility of attending college, there are resources to support you in getting a quality education.

For more information about scholarships please contact your high school career counselor, or visit our website at: [www.careers.wa.gov](http://www.careers.wa.gov).



# What do you know about the National Day of Silence?

April 19, 2009 is the 13th annual National Day of Silence. The National Day of Silence is a campaign designed to increase public awareness about anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment in schools. Youth and their allies bring attention to the harassment faced by LGBT people by not speaking throughout the entire day. Many wear shirts and buttons bringing attention to the event.

The 2008 event was held in memory of Lawrence King, a California 8th-grader who was shot and killed February 12, 2008 by a classmate because of his sexual orientation and gender expression.

Every year, more and more students participate in the Day of Silence, which began 12 years ago when University of Virginia students wanted to find a way to bring attention to anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying, and harassment on campus.

As the day's popularity and exposure have increased, many misperceptions have spread about what the Day of Silence is, why the day exists and what participating in it means. Here are 4 truths that address common misinformation about the Day of Silence.

1. The Day of Silence's purpose is to bring attention to anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment and effective responses.
2. Hundreds of thousands of students of all beliefs, backgrounds and sexual orientations participate in the Day of Silence.
3. Day of Silence participants encourage schools to implement proven solutions to address anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment.
4. The day is a positive educational experience.

The Day of Silence is an opportunity for students to work toward improving school climate for all students. Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) advises students interested in participating to discuss their intentions with their administration and teachers long before the event.

The day is most successful when schools and students work together to show their commitment to ensuring safe schools for all students. Many schools allow students' participation throughout the day. Some schools ask students to speak as they normally would during class and remain silent during breaks and at lunch. There is no single way to participate, and students are encouraged to take part in the way that is the most positive and uplifting for their school.

GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)

For more information about End the Silence go to: National Day of Silence at <http://www.dayofsilence.org/>.

Post Adoption **Support**

## Did You Know?

The Adoption Support Program started in the early 1970's as a pilot project with 300 children and now serves over 13,000 children. The program started with a staff of 3-4 people using typewriters and carbon paper. The ratio of children to staff is still high at 700:1.)

## Book Nook

### BOOK TITLE

**Acres of Hope**

### AUTHOR

Anglin, Patty

### PUBLICATION YEAR

1999 by Promise Press

### ABSTRACT

Recommended by: Barbara McGregor, an adoptive parent. Barbara says that she is not a passionate reader but could not put this book down. Author adopted 8 children with special needs that no one else would take; how the family adapted to all the changes.

If you have any books you would recommend for adoptive parents, please contact Lonnie Locke by e-mail at [lolo300@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:lolo300@dshs.wa.gov). or 1-800-562-5682. Please provide the name of the book, the author, and a content summary.

## Regional Contacts

### Region 1 – Spokane

Jan Lammers\* 509-363-3383  
Pam Copeland\* 509-363-3379

### Region 2 – Yakima

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(Financial Specialist)

### Region 3 – Monroe

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### Region 4 – Bellevue

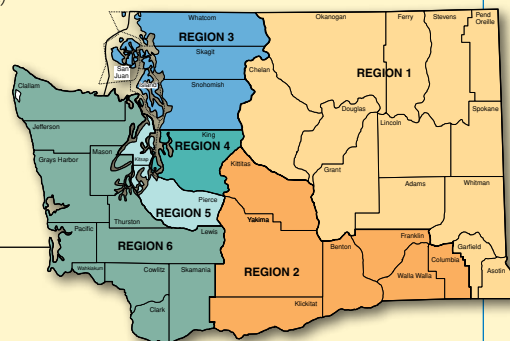
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(Social Worker)

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Laura Davis\* 253-983-6281

### Region 6 – Tumwater

Cheryl Barrett\* 360-725-6758  
Kim Mower\* 360-725-6778



**Toll free number:** 1-800-562-5682

(listen carefully to the recorded message)

\* Adoption Support Consultants

## Statewide quarterly consultation meeting

An opportunity for Foster Parents to be heard!

Do you know what was discussed at the last statewide meeting and do you know when the next meeting will be held?

Issues discussed at the statewide meeting on January 13, 2009:

- Travel Reimbursement
- Respite
- Courtesy Supervision
- DLR/CPS Investigations
- Relative Placements
- Next meeting April 8, 2009

Please contact your regional representatives for more information or:

Michael Luque, MSW, Foster Care & Kinship Care Program Manager, Children's Administration, (360) 902-7986, or email [lumi300@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:lumi300@dshs.wa.gov)

- or -

FPAWS President Beth and Mike Canfield at (800) 391-CARE or (360) 377-1011



## Important numbers to know when you take care of children in out-of-home care

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868

### ON-GOING AND CRISIS SUPPORTS FOR FOSTER PARENTS

Under contracts with the state, three private agencies are working to build supports for you within the foster care community. Supports include hubs, support groups, and matching new foster parents with veteran foster parents. To get connected:

- If you live in Eastern Washington, the Olympic Peninsula down through Pacific County or from Thurston County to Clark County, call 1-888-794-1794.
- If you live in King County, call 206-605-0664 and in any county from Snohomish County north, call 360-510-7601 or 360-863-6530.
- If you live in Pierce or Kitsap counties, call 253-473-9252.
- If you live in King County, the Friends of Youth CARE program provides short-term counseling, education and support to help you care for your most difficult children. 1-888-263-3457.

**Family Help Line:** 1-800-932-HOPE or [www.parenttrust.org](http://www.parenttrust.org). The Family Help Line is a free, statewide training and referral line for the families of Washington state. Last year, the Family Help Line received more than 5,000 calls and requests for information. Calls can last up to 90 minutes and parents can call as often as needed.

**Support for foster parents under investigation for allegations of abuse or neglect:** Foster Parent Investigation Retention Support Team (FIRST) 253-219-6782. Monday through Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868

**Mental Health Crisis Line Information:** The crisis line telephone number for your county or region is available on the DSHS Mental Health Division website at: <http://www.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/crisis.shtml>.

### GENERAL FOSTER PARENT INFORMATION FOR THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

FPAWS: Foster Parent Association of Washington State, 1-800-391-CARE (2273) or [www.fpaws.org](http://www.fpaws.org). FPAWS is seeking new members and supporting foster parents in many ways, including referrals to local associations.

Kitsap and Pierce County information about becoming a foster parent or to receive foster parent support: Foster Care Resource Network, 253-473-9252. Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day.

### RESOURCE INFORMATION AVAILABLE STATEWIDE

Get connected to information on resources in your area by calling 211 – a toll free number.

Children's Administration Foster Parent Website:

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>

Children's Administration Foster Parent Training Website – Trainings are open to all licensed foster parents, licensed relative caregivers and unlicensed caregivers. For information about foster parent and caregiver training, check out:

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>

### CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION FOSTER CARE LISTSERV

Join the 400 people who have subscribed to the List Serve

<http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1> for updated information on resources for the work you do in caring for children.

Family Planning Services are designed to help avoid unwanted or mistimed pregnancy and are available through your local Community Service Office (CSO). Each CSO has a full time Family Planning Nurse to help provide services to Medicaid eligible clients. There is also a Family Planning hotline number 1-800-770-4334.

## Sign up for Camp To Belong – NOW!

Camp To Belong is a camp designed to reunite siblings separated as a result of out of home care. Sign up now through the foster parent website at [www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/).

Space is limited so be first in line to take advantage of this exciting opportunity to connect with family.

## Upcoming events in 2009

### Free for children!

#### Well-Child and Annual Exams

(aka: Early and Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment)

Well-Child check-ups for children are an important developmental check for children. If you have questions about Well-Child checks and dental exams please contact Michelle Bogart, Foster Care Health Program Manager (360) 902-8006 or email [bogm300@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:bogm300@dshs.wa.gov).

**Cost:** Free!

### Expect Success – One Day Summit

This one day collaborative summit "Expect Success" Supporting Foster Youth in Schools is designed to create understanding and strategies to assist children and youth who have been exposed to complex trauma.

**Cost:** Free!

**Clock Hours:** Three

**When:** March 26, 2009

**Where:** Blackriver Conference Center Puget Sound Economic Services Division (ESD) in Renton

**Who:** Foster and relative families, educators, counselors, social workers, medical professionals

Contact Jim Jones [jonj300@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:jonj300@dshs.wa.gov), Mick Moore [mmoore@psed.org](mailto:mmoore@psed.org) or Phoebe Sade Anderson [phoebe@treehouseforkids.org](mailto:phoebe@treehouseforkids.org).

### Sibling Visits Preserve Vital Connections

Visits with those with whom children have strong bonds are important to each child's ongoing well being, and their sense of permanency and stability. The sibling connection is a powerful connection. Let's all work to help keep it that way by making sure the children in our care are experiencing the required twice-monthly visits with their siblings. Ask your social worker how you can assist in maintaining a strong connection with siblings.